

## 9. MOTOR CARRIER OFFICE

One of the key recommendations of this study is the creation of a single office within DDOT to coordinate all motor carrier-related issues (trucks and motor coaches). At present, regulation and enforcement of motor carrier activities is handled by several different agencies within the Federal and District governments. While this allows each agency to apply its own specialized expertise, it also creates a confusing and disjointed regulatory environment. Representatives from trucking firms and District government agencies who were interviewed for this study all stated that they had at best an incomplete knowledge of who does what with respect to motor carrier operations. District agencies must better coordinate, cooperate, and communicate among themselves to improve the regulatory structure of motor carrier management.

For a more complete understanding of the overall regulatory picture, Figures 26-32 show flow charts mapping the current processes for the following activities:

- Commercial driver licensing
- Commercial vehicle licensing
- Washington, DC lawmaking
- Traffic and parking regulation and enforcement
- Size, weight and safety enforcement
- Review of loading zones in development plans
- Review of construction truck traffic control plans

While these diagrams simplify some processes to highlight the important steps, a glance at them shows how complicated some of these processes are. During interviews conducted for this study, many commercial vehicle operators expressed frustration that they did not know how to navigate the maze of regulations and offices to, for example, get permission to temporarily close a lane of traffic to work on overhead utilities. In some processes, there seem to be extraneous steps, such as the DCRA issuing permits for oversize and overweight vehicles. Expertise on roadway geometry and condition rests in DDOT; it seems that permitting oversize and overweight vehicles should be its responsibility. Other processes are spread across different agencies, making coordination difficult. For example, parking policy is created in DDOT while parking enforcement is done by DPW. Careful coordination between policy and enforcement is important to get good policies and effective enforcement.

Some degree of complexity is inevitable and is not necessarily undesirable, since it allows each of the agencies to apply its specialized resources to specific motor carrier issues. Nonetheless, improvements could be made. There are opportunities for streamlining administration without sacrificing expertise. Moreover, the diagrams show that the several different motor carrier processes operate in isolation from one another. There is no single office or agency with a comprehensive understanding of all motor carrier issues; further, there is no single agency or office to help the freight industry navigate the administrative labyrinth to comply with all of the relevant regulations. The following recommendations are designed to address these issues.

## **9.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A MOTOR CARRIER OFFICE**

DDOT should establish a Motor Carrier Office (the exact name to be determined later, but abbreviated MCO here) with the following of responsibilities:

- ***Serve as the single point of contact for motor carrier-related inquiries.***  
The MCO would promote motor carrier safety and regulatory compliance by serving as a “one-stop shop” for freight and bus industry inquiries. This would include questions about driver licensure, vehicle registration, routes and restrictions, size and weight limits, noise restrictions, and hazardous materials transport. The MCO would provide information and outreach materials through a combination of walk-in office hours, telephone lines, and a website portal. In most cases, the MCO would provide inquirers with an overview of the relevant regulatory process and refer them to the appropriate agency. The MCO would also receive complaints and suggestions from residents and the business community on issues such as noise, parking, and routing. These would either be referred to the relevant agency or acted on directly, as appropriate.
- ***Staff the proposed multi-stakeholder Motor Carrier Committee.***  
The Motor Carrier Committee would bring representatives from the public and private sectors and residents together to discuss issues related to motor carriers and develop mutually beneficial solutions. The MCO is the logical choice to be the city’s principal staff-level representative to this committee.
- ***Act as the lead office in designating preferred motor carrier routes and motor carrier restrictions.***  
This function would be transferred from DDOT TSA and the Infrastructure Project Management Administration (IPMA), and would include the formulation of restrictions related to routing, weight, time of day, and other factors. As part of this role, the MCO would also be responsible for commissioning and overseeing the engineering studies, stakeholder consultation, and other research necessary to develop and implement these policies.
- ***Issue special permits.***  
Currently, overweight and oversize vehicle permitting is done by the DDOT Public Space Management Administration (PSMA) and the DCRA. The implementation of the recommendations of this study would require an additional permitting process for waivers from truck restrictions. The MCO would be charged with developing, in consultation with appropriate agencies, appropriate criteria for evaluating applications and issuing permits. This function might also entail coordination with the DMV, so that vehicle registration information could be reviewed at the time of permit processing.
- ***Work with the DDOT Chief Information Officer on motor carrier technologies.***  
The MCO would oversee the research and development efforts on ITS/CVO and other technologies related to truck and bus traffic.
- ***Work with DDOT TSA, IPMA, and other DDOT administrations on various issues relating to motor carrier traffic, including construction trucks.***

This would include curbside management policies, parking enforcement, review of roadway construction plans, and other traffic management issues as appropriate. As part of this duty, the MCO would coordinate with other agencies to develop a plan to monitor and mitigate the effects of construction-related vehicles, given that construction traffic is inherently short-term and that construction vehicles do not establish regular, long-term travel patterns. Also, the MCO would review construction-related traffic control plans, issue any necessary permits for truck routing, and coordinate construction-vehicle routing among the different construction projects ongoing at any given time.

- ***Coordinate with, and provide input to other government agencies on motor carrier-related issues.***

Specifically, the MCO could:

- Work closely with the MPD on noise regulations and particularly on size, weight, and safety enforcement. For example, the MCO could provide suggestions to the MPD on priority enforcement locations.
- Work with planning and zoning authorities to review development plans and ensure that proposed developments include adequate off-street loading areas.
- Coordinate with the DMV on commercial driver licensing, vehicle registration, oversize vehicles, annual safety and emissions testing, and the adjudication of parking tickets. The DMV would retain responsibility for these functions.
- Coordinate with the Emergency Management Administration, FEMS, the DOH, the MPD, and Federal authorities such as the FBI, the Secret Service and the Capitol Police on issues relating to the transport of hazardous waste and materials, explosives, radioactive materials, and on emergency management and evacuation procedures.

- ***Coordinate with other local, regional, and Federal public-sector bodies as appropriate.***

This could include assisting the Capitol Police, DHS, and other agencies on security matters. Regional coordination on motor carrier issues could also be established with the MWCOG, and with representatives from Maryland, Virginia, and nearby cities and counties. The MCO would also work with agencies of the U.S. DOT, including the FMCSA and the Research and Special Programs Administration Office of Hazardous Materials Safety.

- ***Identify and manage motor carrier-related funding sources.***

This would include establishing fees for motor carrier licensing, registration, and permits, as well as penalties and fines for motor carrier program violations. Funds generated by the MCO could be retained to pay the cost of implementing and enforcing the program.

Most District agencies would retain their current motor carrier functions. Specifically, the DMV would continue to handle operator licensing, vehicle registration, annual safety and

emissions inspections, and the adjudication of parking tickets, including the fleet program that allows owners of commercial vehicle fleets to pay their parking tickets once a month. Planning and zoning authorities would continue to operate as before, except for their new coordination with the MCO on off-street loading areas. The MPD would retain all of its enforcement powers but would also coordinate with the MCO on motor carrier enforcement and on noise complaints related to motor carrier operations. Likewise, the Department of Emergency Management and other public safety agencies would retain all of their responsibilities, although, again, the MCO would assist them as appropriate.

One recommended change to the status quo is the transfer of responsibility for the enforcement of parking regulations from the DPW to DDOT TSA. Placing policy and enforcement within the same agency would simplify administration, allow parking policy to be adjusted more nimbly in response to observed changes on the streets, and reduce errors caused by miscommunication between agencies.

**Figure 26. Commercial Driver Licensing Process**

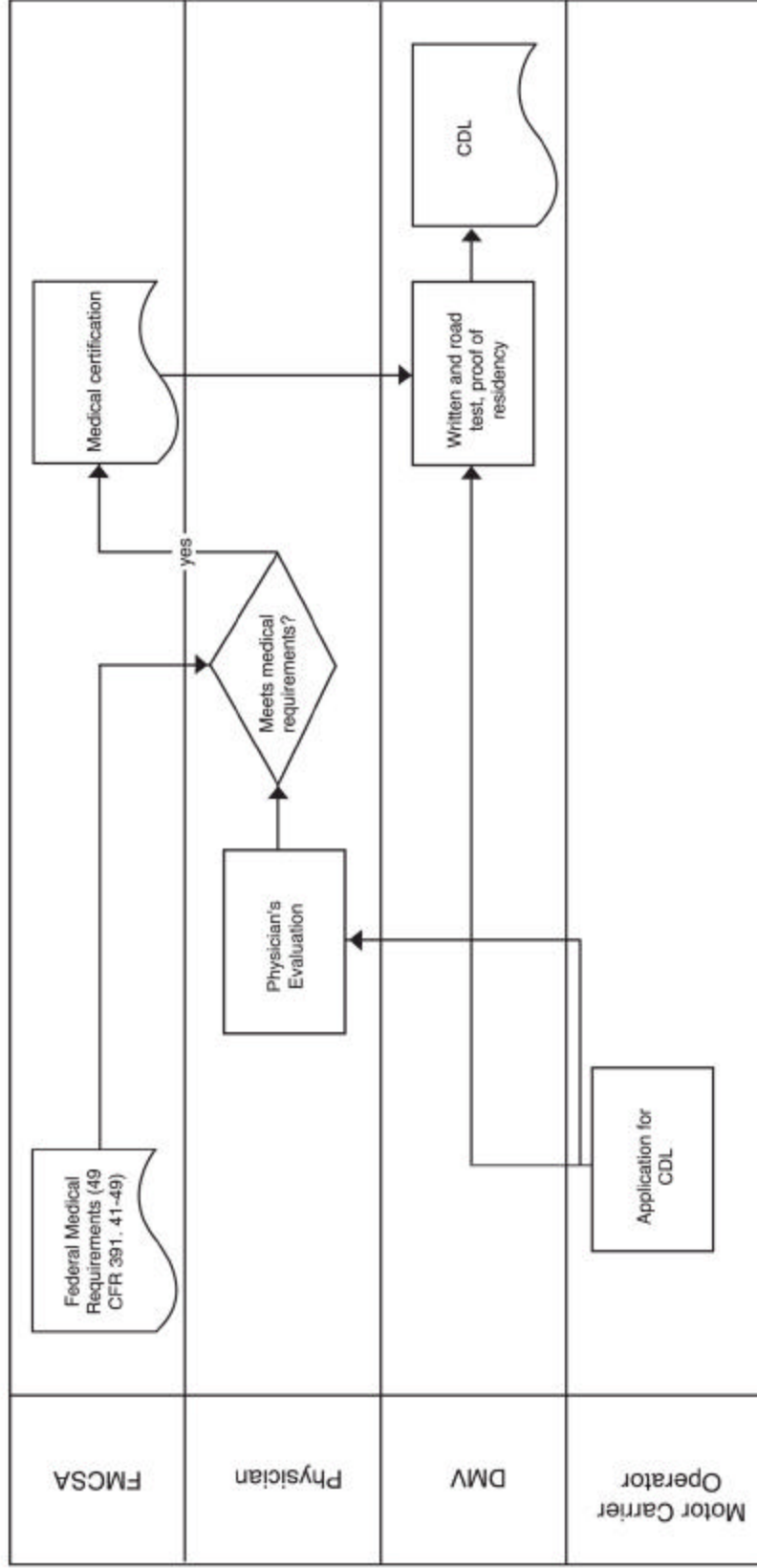
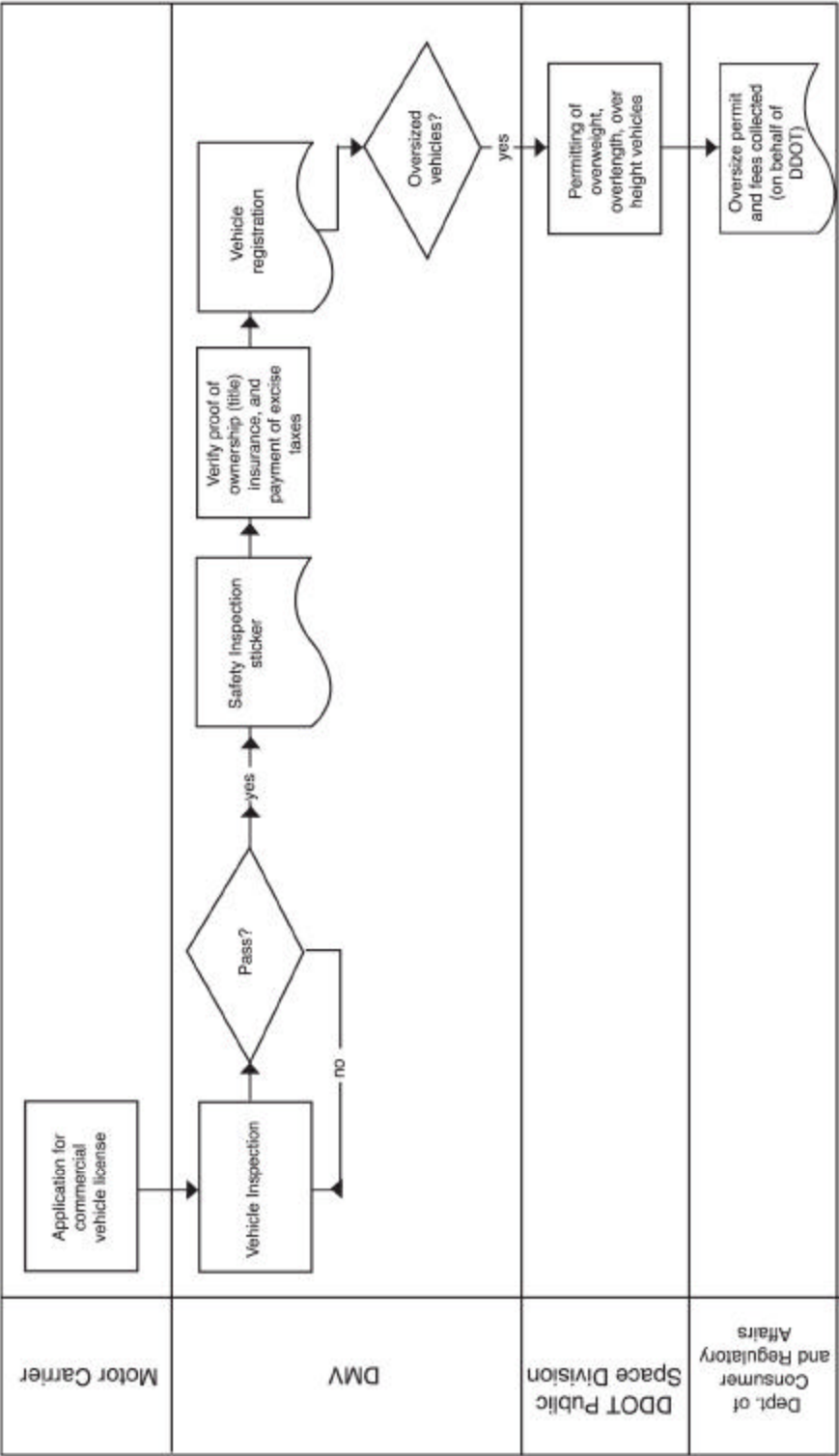
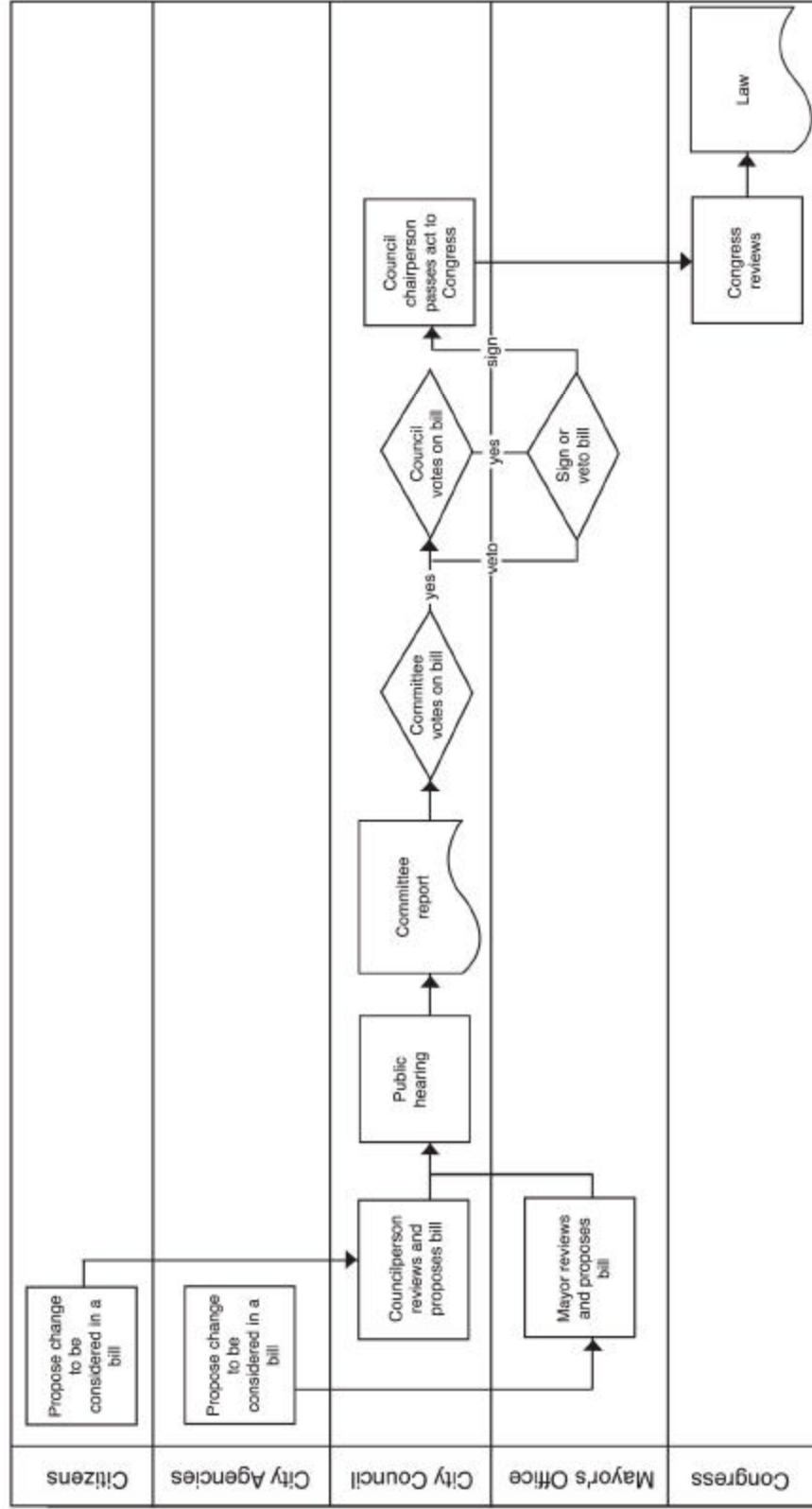


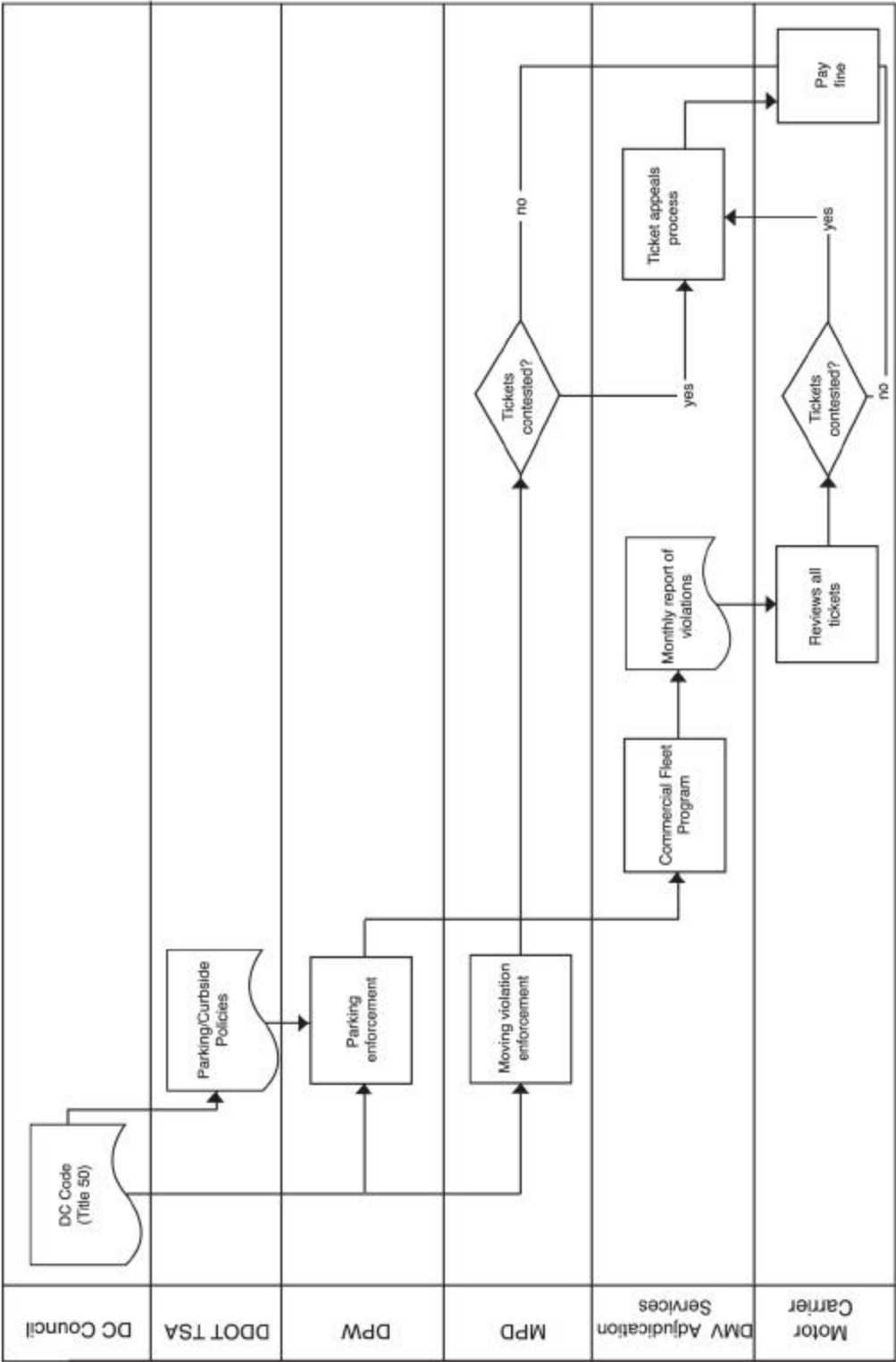
Figure 27. Commercial Vehicle Licensing Process



**Figure 28. Washington, DC Law-Making Process**

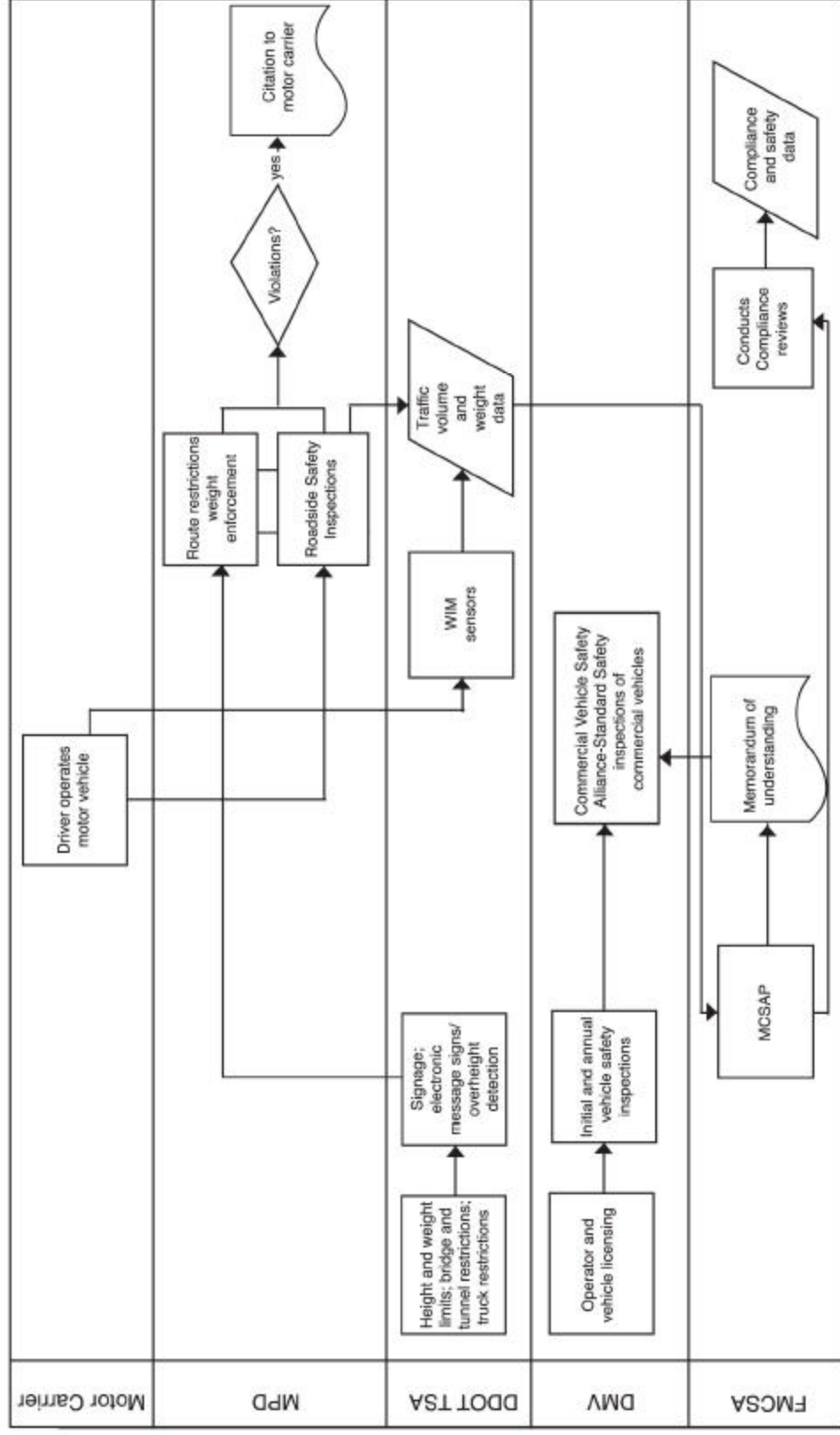


**Figure 29. Traffic and Parking Regulation and Enforcement Process**

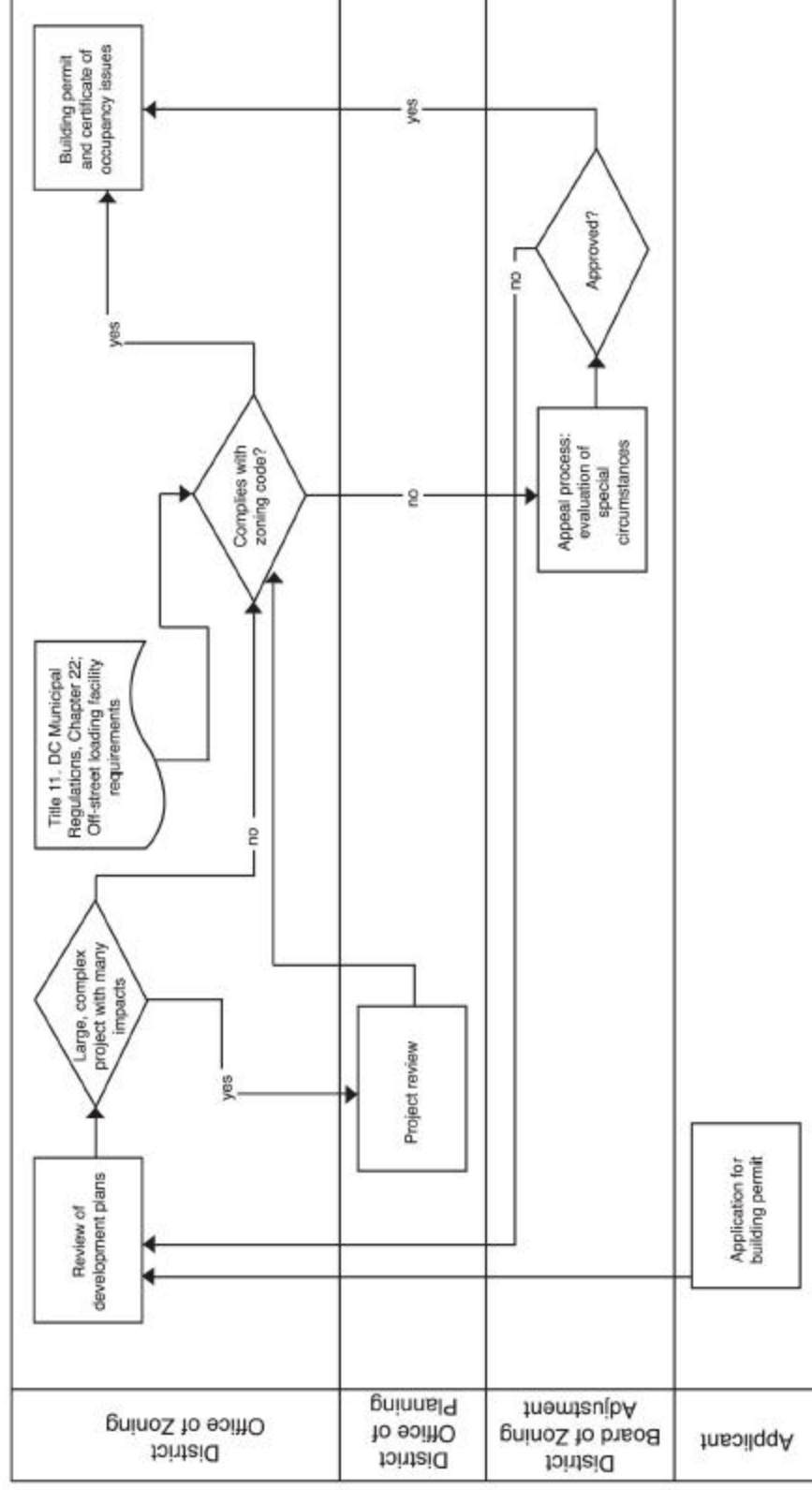




**Figure 30. Size, Weight, and Safety Enforcement Process**



**Figure 31. Review Process for Loading Areas in New Developments**



**Figure 32. Review of Truck Traffic Control Plans in Construction Projects**

